

CELEBRATING DOWNTOWN

Vol. 15 - July 2024

Special Section of the

RepublicanAmerican



MAIN STREET
WATERBURY

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BUSINESSES

- B1 AJA African Hair Braiding
 - B2 A.K.A.N. West Ind. & Am. Variety Store
 - B3 Boost Mobile
 - B4 Botanica Y Templo Inke-wewe
 - B5 Cricket Wireless
 - B6 Earthship Studios
 - B7 Family Dollar
 - B8 Grand News
 - B9 Greenland Convenience & Smoke Shop
 - B10 I.O.B Blow Dry Bar
 - B11 JN Beauty Barber
 - B12 La Sabrosa Nails
 - B13 Main Street Insurance/ Liberty Tax
 - B14 Mar-Vic Cleaners & Tailors
 - B15 Mary's Spirit Shop
 - B16 Master Barber CT
 - B17 Metro PCS
 - B18 MinuteMan Press
 - B19 Mohican Mini Mart
 - B20 New Millenium Barber Shop
 - B21 No Mean Girls Allowed Co. Beauty Bar
 - B22 One Touch Repair
 - B23 Palacio Salon
 - B24 Rendezvous Apparel
 - B25 Santander Bank ATM
 - B26 Southbury Driving Academy
 - B27 TD Bank
 - B28 The Black Cat Spirit Shop & Botanica
 - B29 The Gathering Room
 - B30 Tristan's
 - B31 Urban Beauty Supply
 - B32 Walgreen's Wellness
 - B33 Waterbury Gulf Gas
 - B34 Waterbury Pharmacy
 - B35 Webster Bank
 - B36 Webster Bank ATM
- Hair Braiding
 - Clothing
 - Telecommunications
 - Religious Goods
 - Mobile Phones
 - Tattoos, Yoga & Wellness
 - General Goods
 - Convenience Store
 - Convenience Store
 - Beauty Salon
 - Barber Shop
 - Nail Salon
 - Insurance & Tax Prep.
 - Dry Cleaner
 - Liquor Store
 - Barber Shop
 - Mobile Phones
 - Local Printer
 - Convenience Store
 - Barber Shop
 - Beauty Salon
 - Electronic Repair Store
 - Beauty Salon
 - Clothing Store
 - ATM
 - Driving School
 - Bank
 - Cultural Gifts Store
 - Art Café
 - Clothing Store
 - Beauty Supply Store
 - Pharmacy
 - Gas Station
 - Pharmacy
 - Bank
 - ATM

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- F1 Boru's Bar
 - F2 Central Square CT
 - F3 China One
 - F4 Diorio Restaurant & Bar
 - F5 Domenick & Pia
 - F6 Dunkin'
 - F7 Extry Sweet Dominican Cakes
 - F8 Golden Wok
 - F9 Grand Street Tavern
 - F10 La Cazuela
 - F11 Louie's Pizza House
 - F12 Pizza Express
 - F13 Red Velvet Bar & Grill
 - F14 Seven Villages Restaurant
 - F15 Signatures Restaurant
 - F16 Spirit Café
 - F17 The Bagel Exchange
 - F18 The Green Deli & Convenience
 - F19 The House Of GOATS
 - F20 The Patio Bar & Café
 - F21 Tullamore Public House
 - F22 Via al Paraiso
- Food & Drink
 - Live Music Bar
 - Chinese Restaurant
 - Italian Restaurant
 - Italian Restaurant
 - Coffee/Breakfast
 - Bakery
 - Chinese Restaurant
 - Food & Drink
 - Dominican Restaurant
 - Italian Restaurant
 - Italian Restaurant
 - Food & Drink
 - Diner
 - European Restaurant
 - Café
 - Coffee/Bagels
 - Deli
 - Restaurant
 - Food & Drink
 - Food & Drink
 - Latin American Restaurant

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 - P2 Center Street Garage
 - P3 Center Street Surface Lot
 - P4 Field Street Entrance
 - P5 Marriott Garage
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 - P7 Scovill Street Garage
 - P8 UConn Garage
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 - Privately Operated Public Parking
 - Privately Operated Public Parking
 - Pay Station Public Parking
 - Municipal Garage Parking
 - Public Parking
 - Municipal Garage Parking
 - Campus Parking

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 - I2 Congresswoman Jahana Hayes
 - I3 Courtyard by Marriott
 - I4 Greater Waterbury YMCA
 - I5 Mattatuck Museum
 - I6 Palace Theater
 - I7 Post University
 - I8 Shakespeare Productions
 - I9 Silas Bronson Library
 - I10 The Afro-Caribbean Cultural Ctr.
 - I11 U.S. Post Office
 - I12 UConn Waterbury
- Dormitory
 - U.S. Government
 - Hotel
 - Health & Wellness
 - Art Exhibitions
 - Music & Performing Arts
 - Online Education Hub
 - Theatre Company
 - Library
 - Cultural Center
 - Postal Service
 - College Campus



MAIN STREET
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CELEBRATING DOWNTOWN



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Cover & Inside Photo: Waterbury Clock Tower by Derek L. Ward

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Susan Sprano

Chairwoman,
Main Street Waterbury



Dan Pesce

Director,
Main Street Waterbury



MAIN STREET WATERBURY

CULTURAL. HISTORIC. VIBRANT.

On behalf of Main Street Waterbury, we are pleased to present the latest issue of Celebrating Downtown.

Main Street Waterbury is proud to have once again earned accreditation from the National Main Street America program—a national leader in economic development and community revitalization in older and historic commercial districts. Nineteen years as an accredited program is a testament to the hard work, tremendous volunteer talent, and very generous stakeholders and donors who share our passion to make Downtown Waterbury a great place for all our residents.

Over the last year, Main Street Waterbury carried on the tradition of signature events like the Brass City Brew & 'Que, the Brass City Jazz Fest, The Downtown Banner Program, Downtown Holiday Window Decorating Contest, monthly Happy Hours, and the continuation of the Stephen R. Sasala Scholarship.

Between the Brass City Jazz Fest in August and the Brass City Brew & 'Que in October, thousands of residents and visitors came to downtown Waterbury—bringing an economic boost to area hotels, restaurants, and other businesses.

While public improvements to our roads, sidewalks and infrastructure continue, Downtown Waterbury is also seeing a rise in private development. As this investment increases, and we begin a new program year, we do so with renewed energy and rejuvenated branding. We are proud to have collaboratively developed a new logo to better reflect the new Main Street Waterbury. Look for this on our website, social media, advertisements, and more in the future.

This guide will tell you more about some of these initiatives and other exciting news from the downtown area. The articles will inform you, update you, and hopefully inspire you to join us in continuing our mission.

Dan Pesce

Susan Sprano

Expansion of Grant Program Boosts Economic Development Within the Central Business District



Dan Pesce

Director, Main Street Waterbury

The Waterbury Regional Chamber and Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce Foundation, in partnership with Main Street Waterbury, are excited to oversee an expansion of the Central Business District Investment Program, making incentive funding more widely available to businesses looking to locate or expand in downtown Waterbury.

The initiative, approved by the Board of Aldermen, uses \$1.5 million of American Rescue Plan Act funds to establish a grant

program that targets underutilized and vacant spaces within the Central Business District. The Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce Foundation is an affiliate of the Waterbury Regional Chamber.

Under the program, eligible property owners can receive up to \$100,000 to be used for interior or exterior buildout costs for vacant ground floor-level retail space. Property owners with vacant storefronts are eligible for a grant of \$50 per square foot up to \$100,000. Any grant awarded to a property owner must be matched at 100 percent by the owner of the property.

The expansion of the program allows for start-up companies and small businesses independently

owned and operated to be eligible for grants up to \$25,000. This grant funding can be used for new signage, furniture and fixtures, marketing and advertising, limited payroll and more.

Preference is given to restaurants, food and beverage shops, gift shops, clothing and footwear shops to name a few.

Central Business District property owners can also apply for grants up to \$75,000 through our façade program to assist with exterior building improvements that address the appearance and condition of commercial, retail, and mixed use buildings in an effort to preserve the unique character of Waterbury's historic downtown.

As part of the application pro-



cess, businesses must submit a business plan, among other items such as an annual budget and other documentation.

Eligible properties must be located in the Central Business District. The CBD shares the same boundaries as the Main Street Waterbury District. Applications are currently open and can be found at waterburychamber.com



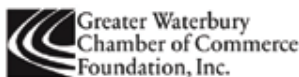
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For complete program guidelines, eligibility, and restrictions, scan the QR code .



SCAN ME

waterburychamber.com/downtown

Main Street Waterbury Celebrates Community Leaders at Annual Awards Event



By David Huck
Main Street Waterbury
Communications Director

Main Street Waterbury held its annual meeting and awards ceremony on Thursday, June 13 at the Palace Theater, during which the organization honored several community leaders who have significantly contributed to the revitalization and vibrancy of downtown Waterbury.

The 2024 Community Partnership Award was presented to Al Taylor, President of ACT Jams Productions and the founder of the Brass City Jazz Fest. Known for his love of music and the city, Taylor has been instrumental in bringing top contemporary jazz musicians to Waterbury, attracting thousands of visitors annually.

"Al needs very little introduction," said Susan Sprano, Chairwoman of the Main Street Waterbury Board of Directors and the Advertising Director at the Republican American. "With his love for the City of Waterbury and music—his cheer and tunes have all added a little dance to our step."

Taylor's contributions extend beyond music, as he volunteers his DJ services for community events like the Naugatuck Chamber's Duck Day and Waterbury Regional Chamber's annual holiday gathering. He also co-founded the Western Connecticut Walk for Autism Speaks, raising over \$1 million for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Lynnette Letsky Piombo received the Advocate of the Year Award for her longstanding volunteerism and advocacy. Piombo's involvement spans numerous cultural and community organizations, including the Mattatuck Museum, Main Street Waterbury, and Saint Mary's Hospital, where she serves as President

of the foundation. Her passion for the arts and dedication to community development were celebrated by the more than 100 attendees. John Famiglietti of the Commercial Connection, LLC and the 2023 recipient, presented the award to Piombo, who urged the audience to build relationships with their neighbors in the community and to be catalysts for change. "Receiving this award is not just a personal achievement but a testament to the importance of our community and the collective efforts we make to improve it," Piombo said after receiving the award.

Zach Keith, Project Manager at the Waterbury Development Corporation, was honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award and was introduced by 2023 recipient Marya DiPerna of Post University. Keith's contributions include over a decade of service to Main Street Waterbury and playing a key role in downtown infrastructure projects. His efforts have been vital in preserving Waterbury's unique history and ensuring reliable services for future residents and businesses.

"Zach's want to make Waterbury's downtown area beautiful and vibrant is commendable and inspiring," DiPerna said.

The awards ceremony also recognized past recipients, emphasizing the ongoing community spirit and commitment that drives the organization. Main Street Waterbury, under the auspices of the Waterbury Regional Chamber, continues to spearhead initiatives that enhance the economic and cultural landscape of downtown Waterbury. These events include the Brass City Jazz Fest, taking place on August 3, and the Brass City Brew and 'Que on September 7.

During the event, Main Street Waterbury Director Dan Pesce—who joined the organization in January—unveiled a new, updated logo for the organization, discussed



2024 Community Partnership Award winners
Al Taylor,
Lynnette Letsky Piombo,
Zach Keith

the recent 19th accreditation for the group, and presented the Stephen R. Sasala II Community Partnership Scholarship to Destini Langs of the Waterbury Career Academy. Langs will be attending Howard

University in the fall.

For more information on Main Street Waterbury and its initiatives, visit their website or follow them on social media.



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Better Business with Magic

Waterbury's Harry Potter Day brings customers to downtown by showcasing the wizardry of Harry Potter and the magic of local businesses.



Cyril "CJ" May

Waterbury Harry Potter Day organizer



When Waterbury expanded the annual Harry Potter birthday celebrations at Silas Bronson Library to include most of downtown, it entered into a unique partnership and experiment. Could a magical event that filled the City be created? As the event approaches its 6th year of Waterbury Harry Potter Day on July 26 and 27th, organizers can feel comfortable that the answer is "yes!"

For most witch and wizard families the day begins at Minuteman Press where they can take selfies in front of a Hogwarts banner and pick up their magic map. The map provides a dragon's eye view of downtown as well as the names and locations of the participating walkable venues. The map also aids them in gathering clues for the Wizard Quest, and in providing a list of each venue's unique offerings. Spirit Café brews butter beer lattes and child friendly wizardly beverages. Grand News sells chocolate frogs from Fascia's Chocolates. Post University offers activities and Congresswoman Johanna Hayes' staff challenge visitors with Harry Potter trivia.

Last year more than 20 venues of all types participated.

After making the rounds to some or all of the venues, participants typically make their way to the front of the Silas Bronson Library, where vendors and community organizations set up. There they find more activities, along with performers like magicians, bubble artists, fire-breathers, live owl demonstrations, and shadow puppets.

Another bit of magic is that Waterbury Harry Potter Day is free. Venues are not asked to "pony up" money nor required to participate in any specific way. Some do offer freebies: The Marshal's office gives out candy. Vendors and community groups are not charged to set up on the library lawn. The magic map, outdoor activities and most of the activities are also free to attendees. Money to pay performers has come from generous sponsors to the tune of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year. Sponsors are still needed and welcome!



This year will feature additional fun beyond Friday's downtown daytime activities. Elac Aviles and Tony "Magic Man" Feliciano will perform at 6 p.m. on July 26 at Barnes & Noble for families (free). Saturday daytime will feature activities for kids and a performance of "Once Upon a River" by Cyril the Sorcerer at the Mattatuck Museum. Saturday night the "Discoverie of Witchcraft" show returns to the



Mattatuck Museum. This show is for ages 15 and up and will be preceded by a whiskey tasting from Litchfield Distillery....a bit of "Spirits with the Spirits." The Matt Saturday events are ticketed.

The Greater Waterbury area has so much wizardry! The wonders of the day were enough to garner very positive TV news coverage each of the five previous years. Harry Potter Day is helping us show that the magic is here!



More information:

Most updates will be posted to
www.facebook.com/waterburyharrypotterday
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Jose A Gonzalez
 A.K.A. Checo

A Message from the Waterbury Chief of Police



Fernando Spagnolo
Chief of Police

**“To protect with vigilance
and serve with impartiality,
while engaging in a strong
partnership with the
community”**

This past year, the Waterbury Police Department has continued to work with our community. Police personnel continue to provide uninterrupted services to the City of Waterbury. We continue to seek out best practices to implement in order to continue to serve the city in the most efficient and best way possible. We continually work hard to add to the ranks of our sworn personnel. Fortunately, with the assistance of Human Resources and support of our Mayor's Office, we were able to start hiring lateral officers to reduce the amount of time in filling our vacancies. As of May 2024, we have hired 16 lateral officers, whom have come to us from all over the country as far as San Diego, California. We also continue to recruit, and hire entry level officers, and we had in upcoming Police Academy class starting in June of 2024. The Waterbury Police Department continues to see personnel movements, such as welcoming in a new Deputy Chief of Administration in March, conducts recruitment drives, continues to increase the capacity of our Real



Time Crime Pandemic Center, work with local, state and federal partners to combat criminal activity through activities such as participating in DEA's Drug Take Back Day twice a year, work to positively impact our youth through mentoring program at PAL with our officers, firemen, and teachers, and working with Department of Education to provide wrap around holistic services for our youth, and continue to problem solve and try to come up with real common sense solutions to the issues and concerns we all have with what is going on not only in Waterbury, but our nation.

I continue to lead my department with a philosophy of community-oriented policing with an all-inclusive approach. The City of Waterbury is truly a melting pot of cultures, races, and religions for which we are lucky to have. The Waterbury Police Department appreciates all of the richness that each brings to the table, and will continue to work with every one by bringing our very best to the table each day. I welcome members of the community to reach out to my staff and I in order to bring ideas on how we can better protect and serve together. And I thank those in the community and surrounding communities that have reached out. The Waterbury Police Department cannot do this alone, it truly takes each and every one of you to assist us with our mission “to protect with vigilance and serve with impartiality, while engaging in a strong partnership with the community.”

Downtown Waterbury Update



Joseph McGrath
*Director of Economic
Development
City of Waterbury*

Mayor Paul Pernerewski and the Office of Economic Development are committed to encouraging and working with private and public investors to meet the objectives of “The City of Waterbury's Downtown Strategic Plan.” Strong leadership, careful planning, and input from residents, businesses, students, and elected officials enabled us to make positive strides to grow the Grand List, increase property values, and bring jobs to our city's Central Business District.

Our Mayor's on-going efforts to beautify downtown Waterbury continue to elicit positive feedback from visitors, pedestrians, businesses, students, churches, non-profits, and new investors. The completion of the magnificent East Main Street Streetscape project, the continued massive Brownfield cleanup of Freight Street, and the Waterbury Regional Chamber's Central Business District Investment Program enhance our opportunities to attract new businesses and residents. Our recent grant award of \$5.8 million from the federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure Sustainably and Equitably (RAISE) program was approved. These funds will be utilized for the planning and design of a critical aspect of the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail to reconnect

historically disadvantaged neighborhoods by expanding community connectivity and access.

The Waterbury Development Corporation continues to manage the completion of the Downtown Streetscape projects on Bank, South Main, and North Main streets. These infrastructure improvements will ensure that the upgraded services provided will be reliable for years to come. The completion of demolition and the ongoing remediation at 170 and 130 Freight Street, along with 00 West Main Street, will allow our City to market 20 acres of highly desired land to national developers, creating hundreds of jobs and grand-list growth.

Enhancements to the Waterbury Rail Line, improvements to the Waterbury Green, and Library Park, along with historically beautiful, architecturally designed buildings, are creating multiple real estate opportunities. Green Hub Developers are in the process of renovating the beautiful historic building located at 36 North Main Street, which will partially be occupied by UConn's expansion. Investors are in the process of converting multiple buildings to mixed use, with commercial on the ground level and market-rate apartments above. Momentum continues to build in downtown!

The Mayor and the Office of Economic Development will continue to work with private and public investors who are convinced that Waterbury is a prime location for future opportunities, both residential and commercial. Our city is centrally located between Boston and New York and offers historic building stock, improved rail and bus lines, downtown student housing, and an affordable cost of living. Mayor Pernerewski will be sure to keep you informed of updates through the newspaper, social media, and his monthly radio show.

Downtown Roadway Renovations Continues



Zach Keith

Waterbury Development Corporation

Throughout this past year, the City of Waterbury has moved forward with the second phase of renovations of its aged underground utilities as part of its larger downtown redevelopment initiative. The replacement of Bank Street's 110-year-old water main reached completion this past year spanning from the Interstate-84 West on-ramp to Exchange Place. Additionally, the water mains from 1880 on South Main Street (Scovill Street to the Green) and North Main Street (Green to Phoenix Avenue) has begun and is anticipated to be fully replaced later this year. The sewers on these three streets have also been

relined. The \$11,300,000 project is being funded through a portion of the City's American Rescue Plan (ARPA) fund. These upgrades are a precursor to the streetscape improvements to take place in the next year, incorporating the same design features as East Main Street. The City is taking a multi-faceted approach in making the historic downtown area a better place for those who live, work, and visit.

Coinciding with the complete overhaul of these streets is the renovation of the Historic Odd Fellows Hall building, located on 36 North Main Street fronting the Waterbury Green. The rear portion of the building began as the Second Congregational Church in the 1840s. The front portion of the building was built in 1895 as an Odd Fellows Clubhouse. The building was

later used as the Grieve Bissett and Holland Department Store. Greenhub, who previously renovated the Brown Building on East Main Street and the Howland Hughes Building on Bank Street has undertaken this renovation with private funding in addition to \$10,000,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. Waterbury Development Corporation is overseeing this grant, working with Joe Gramando on behalf of the City. Joe is making excellent progress on this renovation in preparation of the incoming University of Connecticut School of Nursing.

These capital improvement projects are part of a cohesive effort to transform the City's Central Business District, supporting past completed work including renovations to the Waterbury Green,

Prospect Street parking lot, East Main Street, Howland Hughes, Library Park, Palace Theater, Rectory Building, and more. In addition, private developers and investors like Mike Batista and Kirk Marioles are investing significant dollars in the acquisition and redevelopment of vacant buildings in our historic downtown, knowing the opportunity for Waterbury to be reinvigorated into a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive community and local entrepreneurial hub. These projects all showcase the City's integrated approach to tackle critical infrastructure while leveraging the investments for the City's economic development. Through the collaboration and investments made from public and private partnerships, we will continue to see new businesses, residents, and rejuvenation into the downtown that we all care about.

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Andrea Nyquist
*Marketing, Sales, & Public Relations
Officer, Palace Theater*

Peggy Terhune
*Communications Manager,
Palace Theater*

The Palace Theater first opened on January 28, 1922 to great fanfare. The elegant lobbies, crystal chandeliers, gold detailing, along with its majestic grand foyer, quickly established the theater as Waterbury’s crown jewel and one of the finest theaters in New England.

After more than six decades as a venue for Vaudeville, movies, touring shows, and rock concerts, the theater fell into disrepair and closed in 1987. On November 12, 2004, after completing a 30-million-dollar renovation, the Palace Theater reopened its doors to the public, showcasing its new state-of-the-art stage, excellent acoustics, and impeccably restored lobby spaces.

To this day, the Palace Theater in Waterbury remains Connecticut’s most beautiful venue. The theater’s mission has grown over time to include a focus on programming that reflects the wider interests of the community, offering stories from different cultures,

genres, and traditions to all audiences.

Throughout the coming 2024-2025 season, the Palace Theater will be celebrating twenty years in downtown Waterbury since reopening. For two decades, the Palace has brought arts and culture to the region, driving commerce to local businesses and anchoring a vibrant arts community. Partnering with other community groups and educational institutions, the Palace has increased access to the best of the performing arts for thousands of local students and families.

“For twenty years, all of us at the Palace have been proud to serve

the Greater Waterbury community and we are honored to be your local performing arts center,” says Palace CEO Frank Tavera. “We have an exciting season planned for this year, with performers ranging from comedy to Broadway, classical music to rock, speakers to dance companies - and much more.”

The Broadway line-up for this year’s milestone season features six titles that represent some of the most compelling shows Broadway has to offer. From the modernized mythology of *Hadestown* to contemporary stories like *Come From Away* and *Dear Evan Hansen*, the beloved romantic comedy

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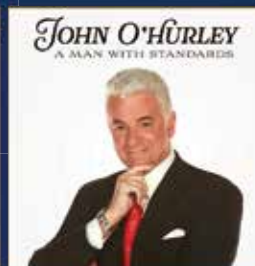
OCTOBER 3 – 6



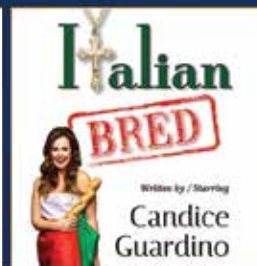
OCTOBER 18



OCTOBER 19



OCTOBER 26



NOVEMBER 16



203.346.2000 | PALACETHEATERCT.ORG
100 EAST MAIN STREET, WATERBURY CT





Mystic Pizza to the story of musical icon Cher and everyone’s favorite wacky family The Addams Family, the 2024-2025 season has something for everyone.

The Palace not only brings the best of Broadway, comedians, and concerts to Waterbury, and serves as the area’s most intimate jazz club, but it now offers a thoughtfully curated collection of smaller presentations designed to entertain, educate, and inspire in the newly reimagined Spotlight Series.

These events shine a light on remarkable people and experiences while showcasing the art of storytelling. Table Readings and I Wrote That! Author Talks offer insights into the creative process of writing, while 2nd ACT features the extraordinary things people do in the second half of their lives. Our newest addition to

the series, Immigrant Stories, presents first-person accounts of moving to a new country and starting over.

Additionally, our CommUNITY Spotlight Series events are interactive presentations that gather speakers and audiences around diverse topics and formats. This season’s presentations include a comedy night, a women’s luncheon and speaker panel, and a celebration of Juneteenth.

As this 20th Anniversary Season opens, the Palace Theater celebrates its ties to the community, continuing to present stories, music, and entertainment that inspire and enrich.

For more information on the Palace Theater and all the 2024-2025 shows and events, please visit www.palacetheaterct.org.



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Restaurant Revival



Steve Bigham

Special to Main Street Waterbury

Waterbury's vibrant restaurant and entertainment scene is in the midst of a major resurgence, undergoing something of a revival as a host of new establishments have opened or reopened this past year. Their arrival is transforming the downtown area into a destination once again.

"The dining scene is definitely back in full-force and it signals the larger revitalization of downtown," said Dan Pesce, Director of Main Street Waterbury.

Take for example, the Grand Street Tavern, where the bar is open once again at what has long been a landmark spot with a storied history; where for nearly a century, locals and out-of-towners alike have come to socialize with friends and meet new people. The storied bar and restaurant officially reopened earlier this year.

Originally known as the Brass City Grill, it is the place where President John F. Kennedy once stopped in for a cup of coffee. The original 43-foot long bar still remains from when the place first opened back in 1931, and the secret passageway to the speakeasy section of the old bar remains from Prohibition.

New owner and Waterbury native, Robert Perri said he had long had his eyes on the tavern, which, nearly 100 years ago, featured a restaurant downstairs and "speakeasy" upstairs.

A pair of switches still remain on a wall near the front entrance that were once used to unlock doors, allowing customers access to a hidden stairway leading to a fully stocked bar where illegal spirits were secretly being served.



Legend has it that the bar came from a restaurant in New Jersey and was gifted to Brass City's original owners by notorious gangster, Lucky Luciano.

The Grand Street Tavern, located at 142 Grand St., directly across the street from the Post Office, presents a more relaxed atmosphere, smaller in size, less of a nightclub, catering more to the upscale lunch and dinner crowds. The menu of food items includes burgers, steaks and seafood.

Weekend entertainment features live acoustic artists, DJ's, trivia nights and much more.



Located at 231 Bank St., Diorio's has been a Waterbury tradition since the 1920's

The grand reopening of downtown landmark Diorio Restaurant & Bar earlier this year came after having been closed for three years during COVID. Diorio owner, Mario Grasso, used the time off to complete a major renovation and cleanup from a broken pipe that flooded the place in 2020.

Diorio's triumphant return came as welcome news to locals who say its classic Italian cuisine is one-of-kind matched only by its vintage tin ceilings, tile floors, roomy booths, and a marble bar that is once again a hub of activity.

Located at 231 Bank St., Diorio's has been a Waterbury tradition since the 1920's and customers say its reopening represents a return to a slice of old-time Waterbury.

"It's long been a watering hole for everyone. A New England classic," said DJ Mahaney, a local attorney.



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Tullamore Public House opened this past spring at 21 Leavenworth St.

Speaking of landmark bars in the city’s downtown, Tullamore Public House opened this past spring in what had been known for more than a century as Drescher’s Restaurant, longtime a vibrant place where locals gathered for decades.

The new establishment, located at 21 Leavenworth St., has more of an Irish feel, just as its name implies.

Owner Mike Pronovost is bringing back the good times at a place long known as a German restaurant and bar with its high ceilings that give off a Bavarian beer hall feel.

Drescher Restaurant, which first opened back in 1892 and had multiple owners during that time, closed back in 2021 and had remained shuttered ever since. Pronovost is well known downtown, having previously owned the Turf Restaurant and the Shamrock. He also once owned the Red Door in Watertown, now known as Jameson’s.

“This place is history and we’re inviting everyone to come down to relive the memories,” Pronovost said.

The 4,600 square foot building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It once sat back in what was known as Harrison Alley, but was moved on rollers up 200 feet to Leavenworth Street where it stands today, in the shadows of the Rowland federal building, which sits next door.

“We call it Tullamore, like the Irish whiskey, or, in this case, we’re naming it after the town of Tullamore in Ireland, which is where the whiskey is distilled,” Pronovost said.

Jameson or Tullamore whiskey and ginger are the bar favorites, while the kitchen serves Irish favorites like corned-beef Reuben’s and Shepard’s pie.



The Patio Bar & Cafe opened this past summer at 210 Meadow St.

The Patio Bar & Cafe opened last summer at 210 Meadow St., a well-known spot downtown that had previously been the home of Shamrock’s Irish bar.

The Patio offers a whole new look and feel, offering up a Latino vibe with a menu filled with Mexican, Colombian and Ecuadorian dishes, along with classics like burgers and cheese fries.

In the evening, the cafe’s lights get turned down, creating a nightclub atmosphere with huge dance floor and live DJ’s spinning Latin American music such as salsa and Merengue.

Owner Juan Pablo Mapocito is Ecuadorian and says the place has all-inclusive feel for the Latin community, where he is well known as a promoter of numerous one-day festivals across the state, known for their music and traditional Latin foods. With the Patio, he is looking to bring that festival-feel all under one roof.

The Patio’s a hub of activity and the menu is highlighted by Latin classics like burritos, tacos, quesadillas, fajitas, along with specialties envebollado de peszcado, a traditional seafood soup, and guatita, a cow-belly Ecuadorian favorite served with a nut-based sauce.

A short walk from city hall, the post office and train station, and close to Routes 8 and 84, the Patio lies at the heart of the city and draws crowds from a city with a diverse culture.

Continued on Page 14

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The GOAT has also returned to the city's downtown, back to its rightful place at 23 Scovill St., with a new owner who is bringing the landmark spot back to its old glory—and then some.

The House of Goats, as this upscale restaurant, bar, and lounge is now known, had previously been home to the popular Thirsty Goat, which closed two years ago.

Owner Paris Allison has turned things up a notch with a whole new look and feel, live music and shows, including top standup comedians for the popular "House

of Laughter Night," and, what Allison says are the best burgers and wings in Waterbury.

For Allison, G.O.A.T. is an acronym for "Greatest of All Time," a term used to describe superstar athletes and musicians, and when it comes to the House of Goats, he says "greatness" best describes what it's all about: great food, drink, entertainment and people, typically a 30 and over crowd.

From the kitchen, there's the New York strip, the salmon sandwich, and the Philly cheesesteak egg rolls, just to name a few.

The bar area features plenty of call-and-top selections, especially when it comes to tequila.

"Waterbury is a tequila town. We sell lots of tequila. It's also an IPA town and wine too," Allison said. Among the featured cocktails is the Bob Marley, which pays homage to Allison's Jamaican roots.

Happy hour at the Goat is always lively and then there are the brunches on the weekend.

"There's nowhere in Waterbury where you can come in to have a brunch-style meal and a mimosa, but you can here," Allison said.

House of Goats is not a sports bar, but there are multiple TV's throughout and there's always a game on.

Existing restaurants like Signatures at 29 Leavenworth St., with its classic Italian fare, continue to thrive.

Waterbury Economic Development Director Joe McGrath said the ongoing revitalization is all part of a plan, now 10 years in the making, that focuses on converting downtown office space on the upper floors of storefronts into apartments, as well as major infrastructure improvements.

"It's all about bringing people back to the downtown area, to have more feet in the streets, especially during off-hours," he said.

McGrath said the expansion of UConn-Waterbury's downtown



Happy Hour at the Goat

campus and the future redevelopment of the 20-acre former Anaconda American Brass factory site along Freight Street, are evidence that brighter days lie ahead.

Downtown Waterbury has the added attraction in that it's set up provides convenient "walkability."

"It's easy to park downtown, go out for a drink, or for dinner, and then walk over to the Palace Theater for a show," Pesce said.

Waterbury's downtown, Pesce notes, is not an imitation, like some open-air lifestyle centers that have been developed in recent years.

"We're not that. We are authentic. We have culture and history, and buildings that are over 100 years old with incredible architecture."

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UConn Waterbury Launches “Walkburi” to Strengthen Connections with the Community



Heather Price

*Assistant Director, Academic Affairs
UConn Waterbury*

UConn Waterbury is preparing for an exciting academic year ahead with the launch of Walkburi, an initiative aimed at forging stronger connections between our campus community and the vibrant downtown of Waterbury.

As we gear up to welcome our entire community of 1,600 students and staff back to campus this August – encompassing undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) – our focus is on enriching their campus experience by encouraging exploration and engagement in the downtown area. We aim to transition students into campus life while showcasing the diverse array of local businesses and attractions, from cozy cafes and nail salons to cultural landmarks and museums.

To kick-start this initiative, UConn Waterbury has collaborated with several downtown businesses, all eager to participate in Walkburi. These businesses will offer exclusive discounts to members of the UConn and OLLI communities upon presentation of a valid ID. Through this collaboration, we aim to inspire our students to discover new experiences, support local businesses, and foster a sense of belonging in the community.

To further facilitate students' exploration downtown, the

campus will lead guided tours at the beginning of the semester. These tours will provide students with opportunities to explore participating businesses, enjoy food samples, and learn about downtown's rich cultural and historical landmarks. Additionally, we will host on-campus events that directly connect students with local businesses, promoting interaction and networking opportunities.

We are also thrilled to announce Spirit Café at UConn Waterbury will soon be open to the public! For the past two years, Spirit Café has served breakfast and lunch exclusively to our students and staff on campus in our Rectory Building (next to the Palace Theater at 118 E Main St). Starting next academic year, this location will offer a welcoming space for both campus and community members to connect over delicious meals. Stay tuned for more details!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all businesses participating in Walkburi. Your support exemplifies the collaborative spirit of the community, contributing to the vibrancy of downtown – a place our students call home. These collaborations will enhance the educational experience for our students as they become active citizens in community life and positively impact the community beyond their academic pursuits. We are enthusiastic about expanding these innovative collaborations with downtown businesses and partners.

For questions or ideas for collaborations, please email walkburi@uconn.edu or contact Heather Price at 203-236-9846.



Photo by Steve Bustamante, UConn Library

UConn Waterbury students explored downtown during an introductory Urban and Community Studies course.

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Brass City Jazz Fest Heats up August 3



Steve Bigham

Special to Main Street Waterbury

The city's 5th annual Brass City Jazz Fest is expected to draw thousands of music fans to the downtown area Saturday, August 3 from 2 to 10 p.m.

The eight-hour event is free to the public and will take place on the stage at Library Park, 267 Grand Street, which has a lawn chair seating capacity of as many as 7,000 people.

The concert, presented by Main Street Waterbury, ACT Jams Productions, and the City of Waterbury, is being billed as "a contemporary jazz experience" both on and off the stage.

"Waterbury is going to be full of excitement, and jazz fans will be energized because the music brings the energy," said Al Taylor, a Waterbury native and the event's founder, promoter, and host. "People are coming from all over the Northeast. Jazz fans will travel, especially when they recognize the artists because they hear them on their favorite jazz stations."

The all-star lineup for this year's event includes some of today's biggest names in jazz music, all of them Billboard-charting artists, including Prospect's own Vincent Ingala, Billboard's 2023 Smooth Jazz Artist of the Year.

"My nickname for Vinnie is showtime and that's what he is on the

saxophone," Taylor said.

Also scheduled to perform is Ragan Whiteside, a jazz flutist who is a Billboard #1 and Best Contemporary Jazz Artist Award Winner and 2023 NAACP Image Award Nominee. Then there is top-selling Billboard guitarist, JJ Sansaverino, a prolific guitarist with multiple Billboard #1 hits and a dynamic stage presence. Also set to take the stage is Barry Eastmond, the legendary producer, songwriter, and #1 hitmaker, who will be performing with friends. Eastman is known for writing such hits as Billy Ocean's "Love Zone," Freddie's Jackson's "You Are My Lady," and Anita's Baker's "I Apologize."

The festival will also feature a variety of artisans and business vendors, as well as food and drink options. Taylor said the Jazz Fest is the culmination of a vision he had many years ago to bring live music back to his hometown, particularly smooth jazz, and he says the concert's ever-growing popularity symbolizes the ongoing revitalization of the downtown area.

"My mind was always about the economic development of downtown, so that our local businesses can be a part of the concert. People are coming in. They're staying at the hotels. It brings in people from the region to the businesses here for two or three days. The jazz festival has a

potential to have a huge impact on this city."

Taylor, who hosts the syndicated radio program called "The Groove Show," said jazz is the ideal music for Waterbury.

"Jazz is one of the first forms of music. Everything else has spun off jazz. Contemporary jazz is a cross of R&B, pop, rock, a little bit of everything, but presented in a jazzy, instrumental form where the instruments play the lyrics of the song," Taylor said. "The roots of jazz is cool and smooth. This is a family-friendly event. There's no cussing and fussing and fighting. Jazz fans don't attract that."

Taylor said the concert will build as the day moves along with the crowd reaching its capacity by around 7:30 p.m. when the sun starts to set, temperatures cool and the music heats up.

Waterbury, Taylor said, has always been a special place with places like the Palace Theater, great restaurants and beautiful, historic architecture. But he added, there had been something missing in recent years and believes it is the music that is bringing back the city's pulse. "And it all starts with jazz," he said.

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